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THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA.

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WILLIAM Q. JUDGE, President.

Each member is invited to send questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. When necessary, the various communications will be condensed by the editor. Members should be careful to write distinctly and on one side of the paper only.

In sending questions, or answers to questions, whenever an assertion is made that such and such is a doctrine, or that "it is said in Theosophical literature," and the like, the name of author, article, volume, and page referred to must be given.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

QUESTION 50.

The fundamental question, "What is the criterion of Theosophy?" calls for an answer. Has Theosophy the power of growth, progress and advancement in line with all new expositions of truth? In the minds of many the writings of H.P.B. are regarded as the infallible oracles of Theosophy. But in time criticism is sure to do its work. Consequently it is necessary soon to give out a definition of it much broader, simpler, and more unequivocal than any heretofore offered.

W. Q. Judge.—This is in fact a request to formulate and promulgate a dogmatic statement of Theosophy as we understand it. That is, to go completely back on the genius of the Theosophical movement, which is for the destruction of dogmatism. The strength of Theosephy lies in the fact that it is not to be defined. It is the wisdom of the gods, or of nature. This means that evolution, slowly progressing, will bring out new truths and new aspects of old truths, thus absolutely preventing any dogmas or "unequivocal definitions." Were we to make and declare a defin-

ition of Theosophy it would be only the words of those who participated in drawing it up, and not acceptable to all. And were it possible that all would accept, then would be sounded the doom of the movement. Hence the reply to the question, "What is the criterion of Theosophy?" is that it is found in each man's perception of the Truth: therefore there is no single criterion.

If any persons regard H. P. B.'s writings as the infallible oracles of Theosophy, they go directly against her own words and the works themselves; they must be people who do not indulge in original thinking and cannot make much impression on the times.

As for the Theosophical Society, the moment it makes a hard and fast definition of Theosophy it will mark the first hour of its decay.

Inasmuch as Theosophy is the whole body of truth about man and nature, either known now or hereafter to be discovered, it has the "power of growth, progress and advancement," since every new truth makes it clearer. But among the truths will not be reckoned at any time the definitions, dogmas, creeds or beliefs laid down by man.

E. B. Guild.—"What is the criterion of Theosophy?" The consciousness of each student. There is no "criterion" of Theosophy for mankind collectively. There is no criterion of truth for man collectively in the present stage of evolution of the race. The differing grades of development mentally and spiritually make a fixed standard of truth as to all things for the entire human race an impossibility. The criterion lies in the consciousness of the individual and becomes fixed as to any given point only when his consciousness has attained to truth as to that point.

The philosophy of Theosophy predicates the "growth, progress and advancement" of man, as an intellectual and spiritual being on all lines, and it is this development of man which makes possible "new expositions of Truth." The growth, progress and advancement must be in the *student* rather than in Theosophy as a system of philosophy.

The writings of Madame Blavatsky may be fallible or infallible as we are unable or able to comprehend the truths expressed in them, bearing always in mind that she was a human instrument through whom teachings were given to her human fellows.

The *Secret Doctrine* advanced the outposts; the skirmish-lines are close upon them, while behind the skirmish-lines are the divisions and brigades of foot and horse, and far in *their* rear the

camp-followers lag. The *Secret Doctrine* has raised no new standard, but has advanced the same old standard to a new position for this campaign.

Theosophy is preëminently a study of man in all the many and varied phases of his being and as such comprehensive and inclusive. Its limit lies only in the ability or inability of the student to perceive and comprehend truth.

W. Main.—Of all hopeless quests, that for infallibility is the most utterly soul-wearying.

Pilgrims who have followed this dancing will-o'-the-wisp have found themselves in deserts or quadmires, from which they have not escaped, by simply refusing to see their surroundings. It has led nations into desolating wars and cycles of darkness and degeneration. Fanaticism, bred from blind confidence in the "only Truth Church" or the "True Prophet" or the "inspired and infallible Word of God," twisted the thumbscrews of the Inquisition, sharpened the sword of Moslem against "infidel dogs," and lit the fagots under Servetus.

These material cruelties are the logical outcome of any system based on an assertion of infallibility. According to such "religions" the enemies of God are destined to destruction anyhow, and it is better that they should be forcibly "converted," or else destroyed at once, than remain to lead others astray.

Even where this point is not reached, the dogma of infallibility intensifies selfishness, builds up the boundaries of sects, and interposes a dense obstacle between the personal consciousness and the ray which shines down into each one, either dimly or brightly, according to his past.

Moral or intellectual laziness impels us to demand an infallible prophet or "Master" whose teachings we may blindly follow. The divine ray leads us to doubt, not for the sake of doubting, but that we may compare and test all things; for it is itself both the love of truth and the light of truth. It will grow brighter as we use it and our mistakes will be fewer and less serious. These mistakes are due, not to the light, but to the clouds which are within the lower nature: this lower nature it is our task, not to get rid of, but to perfect. As the clouds condense in rain and the rain is built into living things under the unclouded sun; so I believe that the chaotic and unorganized portions of our nature will be perfected after many lives, and become a part of that particular garden-spot in the universe of consciousness which it was our duty to cultivate. The man who accepts dogma of infallibil-

ity builds a darkening roof over his own garden, and expects it to grow by the light which falls somewhere else.

The young student who listens to the lectures of some learned professor of even what may be an "exact" science will be very foolish if he imagines that his teacher is infallible. Even a Newton or a Laplace may, through inadvertence, make an arithmetical error which the youngest pupil could detect; at times he will make more serious mistakes as he approaches, in its higher branches, the limits of his own knowledge. The pupil will receive final benefit only as he grasps the truth himself, with his own inner nature, and knows that it is the truth, irrespective of the authority of the teacher.

It does not follow that all teaching must be either assimilated at once or rejected. This would be illogical and absurd, would condemn us to practical isolation. If we cannot understand some teaching, but have had reason to respect the source from which it come, we note it down, con it over at times, and endeavor to connect it with those things we have already verified by the light of reason, intuition or experience. The wise pupil may revere and love his teacher without considering him infallible; he will not fly from the extreme of credulity to that which cavils at once at each hard saying; and he will not grovel at the master's feet, however true his own estimate of the disparity of their present attainments. That pupil may at some future time equal or exceed that master.

In like manner we may have reason to believe in the existence of the Elder Brothers of humanity and their messengers or agents, without believing in the infallibility of either.

The great teachers have persistently warned us that the guiding ray, the true Master, the still small voice, the kingdom to be won, the Higher Ego, is to be sought within and not with a "Lo, here" or a "Lo, there." All that the outer teacher can do is to stir us up to pay attention to the light within. All that we can do with outer teachings is to test them by this light.

Our statures may be small, our backs bowed and hunched with slavish worship, but let us stand as nearly upright as we can. This does not imply a strutting self-conceit. True self-respect, while recognizing present failings and unfinished work, will keep us from the attitude of a Pecksniff or a Uriah Heep, or that of a worshipper before the little tin god of present personality.

Yet already we have seen in the Theosophical Society the germs of foot worship, Apostolic Succession, the True Church, a

theosophical Holy Land, and other dogmatic paraphernalia of which the world is sick. If we cannot do better than this, for God's sake let us bury the thing before it breeds a new religious pestilence; and leave the *Secret Doctrine* and kindred writings to those in the coming century who can recognize the true gold, be it much or little, wherever it may be found, and whatever its label.

"Theosophy" means "divine wisdom." Who has it? Similarly "science" means "knowledge;" yet Newton compared his achievements to the work of a child picking up pebbles on the shore, while the unexplored ocean of truth lay before him.

We can provide each other with "head learning," as we do with food; but each one must digest for himself, and digestion involves selection and rejection. Transformed and assimilated, knowledge becomes "soul wisdom," a part of the true man, "for whom the hour will never strike."

How can we acquire this power of selection, this use of the inner ray?

We grow strong by the use of muscle; we learn to swim by floundering; to walk by toddling; we become adepts by the earnest seeking and lonely labors of the neophyte.

What does the questioner want? A definition of Theosophy? or, of the path and duties of the Theosophist, the truth-lover?

"Divine Wisdom" cannot be put in a nutshell and handed over. As for the path, even if we are blind we can tell from which side the sun is shining, and, in this case, as we grope toward the light of truth the scales will fall away.

"There is no religion higher than Truth."

As for the duties, what is broader and more unequivocal than the word "brotherhood."

And yet this must not be mistaken for the sloppy gush and sentimentality which is labeled by some, "heart doctrine." This sort of piosity has a sub-stratum of self-approval, which, if crossed in some way, too often turns another side and shows a snarling vindictive face.

Our fellow pilgrim needs at times a helping hand, but not to be dragged with a constable's grip; or in chains, lest he should get away. He needs food, such as we ourselves have found wholesome, to be set before him to take as he will; not thrust down his throat.

As for the claimant for infallibility, either for himself or for some pet prophet, book, or master, he may belong to what society he will; he is not a Theosophist.

QUESTION 51.

I should like to have explained what is meant by "all experience" in the Secret Doctrine, *new edition, page 45, where it is stated that it is necessary to pass through "all experience" in this manvantara before the Divine Spark can be individualized. Does this mean that one must in the human kingdom have experience of each phase of civilization? Must one be a plumber, carpenter, painter, minister, lawyer, physician, etc., before he can reach full consciousness? I am aware that all experience cannot be attained in any way but by repeated reëmbodiments, but the stumbling-block in my mind is what is meant by* all *experience. Further, is it necessary to go through the whole school of crime in order to develop strength to progress?*

W. Q. Judge.—First, experience, under evolution, in and through all nature's kingdoms is a necessity for all egos because they constitute the spirit, spring and impulse of evolution; without them there would be no evolution. Hence all of that general experience is necessary because inevitable; and only by that great experience is individuality attainable. That is so because such is the law of our being.

Now, take any one of such progresses or kingdoms. It was full of variety. Such variations were inevitable and necessary. Curious shapes of animals were evolved in the evolutionary struggle, all necessary in such a struggle to make perfect. But they were only details in a grand whole, like steps on a journey. Does it trouble us, does the question about "all" arise here? If not, why should it arise about mere details of changing human life, not yet perfect, still struggling to attain, to alter, to polish? Plumbers, painters and carpenters are mechanics, as are those in many other more desirable occupations, but all are for mechanical experience due to our, or any, form of civilization. And the ego cannot get intuition of mechanics if it never is put through that sort of experience. "All experience," being thus found in a statement relative to great outlines and objects of evolution, must be considered thus and not as a mere detail. All possible experiences can be put under a few heads and it is those general types of expepience we have to pass through. How would an ego know of motherhood and fatherhood if it never had the experience? Telling about them would not suffice. How would it know of governing if it had never governed, nor of submission if it had never been in bonds? There should be no stumbling-block in the word "all."

Claude Falls Wright.—In answer to the latter portion of the question—"Is is necessary to go through the whole school of crime in order to progress?"—I should reply: Certainly not. For while it is true that it has been said that all experience is necessary, nevertheless we must be very careful to understand what is meant when such assertions are made. Many actions right and proper to-day, one hundred years ago would have been called crimes, and in the lives of every advancing ego, as it rises, many actions of the dead past, then good, if forcibly reperformed would now seem to be evil. The recognition that any one thing is evil springs from the intuition of the higher ego, and the strength to overcome lies in the efforts that the lower ego makes to hold to the higher and to turn its eyes away from the past. Evil actions are not necessary to anyone, but the knowledge of evil is of course a part of the development of the soul; and when once it comes to full knowledge that such and such a course is not right for it, by removing its attention therefrom it readily overcomes. Crime is then the one thing which prevents progress, not a necessary element of it.

Vespera Freeman.—The latter part of this question it seems to me common sense or intuition answers.

In the natural course of its evolutionary pilgrimage the soul seeks experience in earth life and contacts matter. Crime results from a voluntary yielding to the illusions and temptations of matter and I cannot see how strength to overcome could be gained in that way. Crime can be properly studied only after we have resisted these temptations and illusions and begun our upward progress. The soul having passed through "the whole school of crime" may through the suffering thus entailed gain final purification, but the process is surely unnecessary. This seems clearly illustrated by something Mme. Blavatsky once said to the effect that when a part of one's journey lies through a bog it is bad policy to stop and sit down in the mud—especially when one might cross on stilts.

QUESTION 52.

I understand Devachan to be a state in which the highest ideal of the late personality is attained. H.P.B. says, "He who has placed himself beyond the veil of maya or illusion can have no Devachan." Is it then to be understood that the farther advanced the Ego in the knowledge of Truth, and the closer it come into communion with the one Great Truth, the less need it has for that dreamlike state, Devachan?

Claude Falls Wright.—The teachings concerning Devachan have always spoken of it as an illusion. It is a necessary corollary however to the lives of most men, spent as they are during incarnation often with scarcely more than one ray of spiritual light from birth to death. Everything is illusion not seen from the point of view of the Atman, and it is only when all seven principles are spiritualized, active and coördinated that this again is possible. The ordinary man has no heaven or devachan while here, and the devachanee no real recognition of life on earth. The adept understands both phases simultaneously. Normal man has periodic "days and nights." Seeing with eye of atman, it is said the initiate views all, day and night, together.

W. Q. Judge—I never heard that in Devachan the "highest ideal of the late personality is attained." Were that so the question would answer itself. I have therefore to drop the first statement when considering the question. Attainment of "highest ideals" is only possible when one is above all illusions; certainly devachan furnishes no such condition. There the soul pursues its highest ideals spiritually, and, seeming to carry those all out to highest perfection, it is benefitted, enlarged and strengthened. Devachan is for rest and recuperation and not for action. Not alone do evil and medicore people go to Devachan, but preëminently those who have high and deep—though unfulfilled—aspirations. These are artists, musicians, dreamers, religious enthusiasts. And they, having impetuous thoughts, stay there longer than others.

But those who have been through all those experiences here and in Devachan, and who have triumphed over illusion through self-conquest, do not need devachan because they have grown to their full strength and cannot against their wish be thrust into it by natural force. So they do not become subject to it. But that is the Adept. And he can enter into the devachanic state of another so as to help and benefit the other. We are not such as yet, but may perhaps some day, in the distant future, be able to do such great and altruistic work.

QUESTION 53.

In the November number of the Path *on page 233 Mr. Judge says that Theosophy gives a "partial answer to the query, 'Why is there anything?'" I wish the* Forum *would publish that "partial answer," as I have not yet found it in any of my studies.*

E. T. Hargrove.—It should be noted that the question, "Why is there anything?" differs from the more usual question "What is the object of manifestation?" The latter opens up a wider field of thought: that spirit may gain self-consciousness through manifestation, that matter may become spiritualized, and that consciousness may both gain full control over matter and perfectly express or reflect spirit. The question also differs from the stupefying conundrum, "Why does Parabrahm exist?" To this H.P.B. is said to have once replied, "My dear, I do not know; ask Parabrahm!"

Mr. Judge did not state that a reply was possible to such a question as that, but only to the one raised by him—"Why is there any *thing?* The inevitable small child swiftly replied, "'Cos they could'nt help it." But out of the mouth of babes there sometimes comes wisdom. Elders might profit by it. Mr. Judge's statement that a "partial" answer can be made to this question evidently means *(a)* that there is no answer which completely satisfies the intellect, but *(b)* as compared to the answers made by orthodox religion or orthodox materialism, the position of Theosophy is reasonable and satisfying "Churchianity" volunteers the explanation that an Omnipotent God made the universe out of nothing. But the evident criticism, "Why did God make things so woefully imperfect if omnipotent?"—rather spoils the apparent simplicity of the teaching, quite apart from the absurdity of creation out of nothing. Materialism on the other hand is ever less reasonable, for its blind conflict between Force and Matter must logically be carried back to a point in time when these were simple and homogeneous. From that standpoint, mind did not exist until millions of years later, and was then only a chance product of matter and force. What external condition could have given rise to diversity and heterogeneity in the original protoplasm?

Here science and religion once more stand at two opposite extremes, equally irrational. Theosophy discredits creation out of nothing; discredits matter as capable of generating consciousness or form, and by its teaching of the law of evolution and involution offers a reasonable reply to the question at issue. From unity to diversity all things proceed; from diversity to unity they return. But preceding that (relatively) original unity there had been other vast periods of evolution and involution as far back as the mind can reach and farther. For infinity has no limits, neither end nor beginning. That being the case, and keeping in mind the law of Karma, it is clear that what exists

to-day is the result of spiritual, mental and material forces previously set in motion and now reäcting on the centre from which they originated. If asked what set *those* forces in motion, Theosophy replies that they were in their turn results of still earlier activity, and so back and back till the most obstreperous enquirer must pause for breath. So it may be said that "things" exist to-day as a natural result of previous existence, the fundamental Unity—by whatever name one may chose to call it—forever evolving and involving, manifesting and indrawing its manifestation. That is a law of Its own being, and therefore changeless. Consequently there can never have been an absolute beginning to manifestation, to objective existence, or to "things." They are, because they always have been. It is useless for practical purposes to enter into the illusory nature of both manifestation and time, though much would be said on that point by a Vedantin.

QUESTION 54.

Will egos that lived on this earth, say in Mexico or California, in their last incarnation, be reïncarnated in the same places and born as the present inhabitants?

Joseph H. Fussell.—It might or might not happen so. It would all depend upon the development of these egos and whether they were attracted back to the same places. If exactly the conditions needed by any Ego are provided in the place where that ego was born before, it might come back to the same place. Or if the ego had certain attractions to a particular place, owing to work left undone, it might have to come back in order to complete that work. But in this latter case it might be born elsewhere and come to fulfil his work at that place at a later period of life. The proper conditions for the further evolution of an ego will not, however, necessarily be found in the place where it was before and it will incarnate just where those conditions are to be found. If the ego has had a long devachanic interlude between incarnations it might happen that the conditions into which it is to be born next might be found in an entirely different part of the earth and it will then be drawn to that part of the earth. It is generally conceded that the tide of civilization travels westward and in all probability if the progress of the ego is normal it would follow in its incarnations along with this tide. But so many other things would have to be considered and about which we have no certain knowledge that I do not think anything definite can be stated about the matter.

SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

FOR THE USE OF BRANCHES.

In articles and addresses never use Sanskrit or foreign terms without also giving the English meaning; use English terms preferably.

CONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY.

Doctrines of soulless beings. Important to know that one's immortality is conditional. Meaning of the phrase "loss of the soul;" bad term because not fully expressing what is intended. It is entire separation of the higher manas from the lower manas and consequent absence of all that is spiritual in the lower man. Lower manas is the only part of the lower man incarnated in the body and associated with earth that can achive immortality. And this is only done by its uniting itself with its other half, the higher manas. Life in Devachan only results from this. But strictly by immortality is meant the eternal life of the self, the human personal being. This will live throughout the ages if fully absorbed into its higher nature. Meaning of the phrase in *Isis Unveiled*, "We elbow soulless men and women in every walk in life." Such beings after death, not being united to their spiritual egos, live but a short while in some of the various inner regions. The spiritual ego creates a new lower manas or vehicle and commences again a new incarnation. This is the new personality and is frequently attacked by the dying remnant of the past. This produces all those unaccounted for desires and impressions in everybody. It has been said that a single pure aspiration during one incarnation will insure the immortality of the lower ego and spiritual possibilities in the future.

REFERENCES.

Key to Theosophy, section 9; Bulwer Lytton's *Strange Story*, chapter 32; *Isis Unveiled*, vol. i, pages 345 and 346; vol. ii, 368 and 369.

ANTASKARANA.

The link between the higher and lower manas. Important for study as being the one approach to spirituality in the mind of man. Only acts when the consciousness is normal. During sleep it has no existence. A mode of consciousness, not a principle. Higher manas and lower manas separated during the period of incarnation, save in the case of an Initiate. Antaskarana, the link between them, is a projection of the lower manas toward the higher. All persons project this condition of soul into spiritual regions. The link increases in power if the energy which produced it is steadily maintained. Liable to be temporarily cut off however if not energized perpetually. Antaskarana the "battlefield" of the personality, spoken of in the *Voice of the Silence*. Battlefield disappears when the term of struggle ends. Through antaskarana come all the higher impulsions during any life. Music, art, poetry, if truly spiritual, come from this source as much as philosophy. Careful distinction to be made between sentimentality and true inspiration. Antaskarana may be so strengthened as eventually to awaken the full nature of the human being, and a link thus formed between higher and lower manas

cannot be readily broken. If once accomplished it is always possible for the lower manas to unite itself with its "father" again at any moment.

REFERENCES.

Voice of the Silence, Glossary to "The Seven Portals;" *Theosophical Glossary*, article "Antahkarana."

ASTRAL ENTITIES.

Space full of them. Nearly all persons more or less affected by them, though unseen. Study of them and their actions, the work of many great minds of the past. Elementals — the individualized nature's forces. Elementaries — the shells of the dead. Effort of the student to prevent psychic influences. Dangers resulting from attending spiritualistic seances. Real souls of the dead not in the astral light. Its denizens largely the effect of the action of thought on the part of human beings. Four kinds of "nature's spirits," called by the Rosicrucians those of earth, water, air and fire. This refers to the intelligences behind all things, and the true science of the spirit of the different conditions of nature. Those four "elements" of the ancients were not really elements as the term is now understood, but states of matter — physical, liquid, gaseous, and etheric or fiery. The laws governing these states are the expression of the intelligences behind the astral entities. Ether, part of the astral light. Materializations, spirit rappings, independent voice, mediumship, obsession, possession all explained in Theosophical literature. Students should fully comprehend the explanations given so as to have intelligent knowledge of the subject.

REFERENCES.

Isis Unveiled, vol. i, page 284, 311; *The Astral Light; Key to Theosophy; The Path*, vol. iii, page 219-221; *Ocean of Theosophy*, chapter 17.

THOUGHT.

Action of the ego in a material vehicle. Different kinds of thought, spiritual, intellectual and animal. The last is little more than desire. Presence of the lower manas in the human animal causes the passions of the latter to be mixed with the mind and to become vices. Difficulty of preventing the mind so mixing with the ordinary animal nature. Should control it and not be controlled by it. The mind discolored by whatever it focuses itself upon. This is the so-called thought of most persons. Difficulty of discovering a pure thought. Influences coming from the presence of other people, from our training and education, and from our desires to be avoided. The only correct thought is that which comes from the spiritual being, the higher ego. *Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms* necessary for study. Few Theosophists, any more than other people, consider the necessity for going into their natures and discovering the true causes of their various actions, endeavors and aspirations. Thought the most fleeting and uncontrolled action of all. To hold it steady upon one object, and that a spiritual one, the one in accord with the destiny of the man, should be the endeavor.

REFERENCES.

Magic, White and Black, chapter 9; *Ocean of Theosophy*, chapter 16; *Guide to Theosophy*, article "Imagination;" *Voice of the Silence*, Fragment 1; *Modern Theosophy*, section 'The Astral Light."

SOME CORRESPONDENTS ANSWERED.

S. S. Universal Brotherhood does not mean, as many seem to think, working for the physically poor. It is as much for the spiritually poor as any other. Brotherhood is for all and includes all types of men. The Society is working amongst all classes of men and has scarcely the time to especially take up a mission for charity apart from its other labors. The League of Theosophical Workers has been formed for that purpose and as far as possible it does this work. The special mission of Theosophy is to rich and poor alike, and for the one no more than for the other.

T. D. See answer to this question in the first number of the present series of the FORUM. You should be careful in asking questions to see that they have not been already replied to.

J. B. Spiritualism and Theosophy differ in many ways. Theosophy is the religion of the spiritual nature, whereas Spiritualism, so-called, in the present day mainly consists in investigations and experiments in the astral light. Yes, the Theosophical movement is very much older than the modern Spiritualistic one. And as a matter of fact the latter was started by certain Nirmanakayas in order to afford some proofs of the existence of a psychic realm, for the use of the messenger of the nineteen century, and as particularly to do away with the materialism of this age. The theosophical movement is the outcome of philosophical investigation for ages and is as old as man.

A.T.S. *(a)* No, the Theosophical Society is before all things not opposed to Christianity. No more is it opposed to any religion that aims for the betterment of man. Christianity in the present time however is not what it was, and a great distinction has to be made between the doctrines of the churches and the ancient teachings of Jesus. *(b)* There is no advantage in opposing believers in doctrines of the churches or in raising opposition at all. Seek to explain these teachings if you understand their esoteric basis; if not, consider merely the ethical side and leave the rest alone.

THEOSOPHICAL NEWS AND WORK.

KANSAS CITY T.S. has begun a new era of active work.

SALT LAKE CITY T.S. has organized a Lotus Circle with eight members.

AT DETROIT, Mich., a reading centre has been formed, conducted by Mr. R. O. R. Bergath.

"H.P.B." T.S. held a delightful reception Saturday, December 7th, for the benefit of its Lotus Circle.

A MEMBER of the T.S. in Jersey City has been prayed for by his church for joining the Theosophical Society.

AURORA T.S., Oakland, Calif., has recently adopted the series of topical studies outlined in the Theosophical FORUM.

BELLINGHAM BAY T.S., one of the most recently formed societies, is doing excellent work and indicates exceeding activity.

BROTHERHOOD suppers are to be held in the East Side of New York. This is following the same idea as the Beacon T.S. of Boston.

SYRACUSE T.S. A member of this branch recently paid a visit to New York and reported great harmony and progress in the Syracuse Society.

BEACON T.S., Boston, is continuing the scheme of suppers to working-men, with theosophical meetings afterwards. Good results have come about from this.

CINCINNATI T.S. is holding crowded meetings. A member of the Branch recently visited Headquarters and reports great enthusiasm and increase of membership.

MACON T.S. is having good results from the Atlanta Exposition by additional possibilities of spreading Theosophy through the number of strangers that visit the branch.

NARADA BRANCH is doing good work. In Tacoma interest is increasing daily and several independent reports have been received at Headquarters of the excellent results of the work.

MEMPHIS T.S. is in the thick of the season's work. Interest has been aroused to a high pitch and with the new room and the result of Mr. Hargrove's visit much work will be accomplished.

SANDUSKY T.S. has received fresh impetus from the visit of Mr. E. T. Hargrove. The president reports that the branch is growing steadily and working ahead with excellent prospects for the future.

COLUMBUS T.S. is already showing much growth as the result of Mr. Hargrove's visit to it. A great many applications for membership have come in lately and there are prospects of much increase of interest.

DENVER T. S. has recently taken two rooms at 1450 Emerson avenue. The rooms are centrally located, and it is hoped that they will be filled throughout the whole of the coming season at each meeting.

NEW ORLEANS T.S. is about to commence a period of activity and hard work for the winter. The president writes in anticipation of Mr. Hargrove's visit, and all are looking forward to the good results to come about therefrom.

CLINTON T.S. was chartered on November 27th. As mentioned in last issue this Society is formed of members of the old Indra T.S. at Clinton and great anticipations are entertained from its active propaganda in Clinton. This is the 90th Branch on our roll.

MRS. SARAH A. HARRIS is accomplishing much good work among the Branches and members in British Columbia and the state of Washington. She has visited a number of places and established centres. She will end her lecturing tour and return to San Francisco some time in January.

SHERIDAN, WYO. A letter to Headquarters gives the interesting news that the Hon. Henry A. Coffeen has a class for the study of Theosophy, held weekly in Sheriden. Mr. Coffeen is a member of the Theosophical Society, and there are possibilities of this centre eventually growing into a Branch.

CHICKERING HALL, New York, public lectures continue successfully, the attendance being larger each Sunday morning. The last lecture, December 8th, on *Esoteric Christianity*, was extensively reviewed by the city press.

These lectures are by Claude Falls Wright and are under the auspices of the Aryan Theosophical Society.

League Theosophical Workers No. 1 has had its funds increased by a Violin Romance Recital by Miss Eleanor B. Hooper given in the hall of the Aryan Theosophical Society. The hall was well filled and the audience was delighted. The program consisted in an original recital by Miss Hooper, interspersed with violin music.

Upasika T.S. was chartered November 27th. It is situated in South Brooklyn and is to do work in that quarter. Some members of the Brooklyn T.S., seeing the necessity for an additional Branch in Brooklyn, organized the new Society. The Brooklyn T.S. has in consequence had to do without some of its best workers. This is the 91st Branch on the roll of the T.S.A.

Buffalo T.S. held its first annual meeting for the election of officers and amending of by-laws in the Genesee parlors on the 17th of December. After the reading of reports and the regular business of the meeting refreshments were served and the occasion made one of celebration of the great success of the Branch in the acquisition and dissemination of Theosophical knowledge.

Malden T. S. held an aniversary meeting November 11th and formally opened its new rooms in the Browne Building. The unveiling of an oil portrait of H.P.B. was the prominent feature of the evening. This was made by Mr. Burdock. Speeches were made by Mrs. Harmon, George D. Ayers and Miss M. L. Guild. The meeting was an enthusiastic one and Malden has great hopes for its future.

Whatcom T.S. was chartered December 6th. This Branch is doing active work in New Whatcom, Wash. A short time ago the efforts of Mrs. Ella G. Willson and others succeeded in producing a Branch at Fairhaven, and now their united efforts have resulted in organizing one at New Whatcome. Already, by the addition of new members since the Branch was formed, there are great signs of activity in New Whatcom. This is the 92nd Branch on the roll.

Milwaukee T.S. is having a season of active work, and interest in Theosophy is being manifested throughout the city. Dr. Hill's public lectures are very popular. A number of other members write wood papers. A training-class is about to be started for speakers, as also a Lotus Circle, and a number of other activities organized. The North-side study-clsss is steadily widening its circles, and groups are to be formed on the east and west sides. Much help was given to this Branch by R. D. A. Wade's visit.

Santa Cruz T. S. has rented a hall on Pacific Avenue of 200 seating capacity and has fitted it up as a headquarters with lending library, etc., and with a reading room open from 2 to 4 every afternoon. Besides the Branch-meeting on Wednesday and public lecture on Sunday a class for the study of the *Ocean of Theosophy* is held on Thursday afternoons. The hall was dedicated by lectures delivered by Dr. Allen Griffiths, Pacific Coast Lecturer, on the 24th and 25th of November, both of which were well attended. On the 26th he held a "quiz" meeting and answered questions for an hour and a half. The four dailies in Santa Cruz gave a full description of the new hall and a column and a half reports of the lectures. Dr. Griffith's visit has been of great assistance and given Theosophy a new impetus in Santa Cruz.

CENTRAL STATES COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

The work in the Central States Territory is active. Mr. Harding's last field of labor has been in Cincinnati, with additional lines of propaganda which are being carried forward with an energy and enthusiasm that means progress. His special efforts in Columbus met with unusually good results; from the large audiences that he attracted came new members and good workers. They are planning propaganda work which is to extend out in all directions from their city.

We have a most cheering letter from the Lincoln (Neb.) Branch regarding its members and their general advancement.

Hartington Branch is working on perseveringly; the members feel the need of occasional help which the readers of the FORUM will be able to send them.

Rapid City, South Dakota, is moving steadily forward. The Secretary of the Sioux City (Iowa) Branch, writes that they are over busy; this means an activity in sowing the seed that cannot fail of bringing glorious fruits at the harvest-time.

Milwaukee continues to push the work it has recently inaugurated. The work in Illinois is at present centered in Chicago. Loyalty standing, geograpically, as a central point in this middle territory for sectional work, being also the local headquarters to which the C.S.C. reports come, feels the pulse of this aggregation of workers more distinctly than many another Branch; this has resulted in Loyalty's attempting several lines that do not appear to have attracted the attention of the Branches within this particular field. Its present Branch study, as outlined in a new syllabus, just out, indicates an effort to call forth the thought of its members and friends to Theosophy as successfully applied to the leading problem of the day, the central idea being to bring into prominent attention the fact that Theosophy is practically applicable as a present aid and ultimate remedy for all the inharmonies of daily life.